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to use it in translating *Beowulf*; for the objection raised by Professor Child has no longer the slightest weight. What, then, prevents this imitation? What is lost? Not the initial rime, not the sturdy beat of the four stresses, not that insistent appeal of the forward-and-back of the style due to repetition and parallelism,—all these important elements can be kept, if the translator have sufficient skill. Besides certain collocations of heavy and light syllables, now impossible, one will lose the effect of feminine endings as a persistent fact, feeling not only the loss of the individual endings themselves, but the effect of that loss upon the general movement of the verse. Part of this loss the translator or imitator can prevent; but part of it is irreparable.

Concede this loss; it does not begin to counterbalance the gain, for purposes of translation, in retaining the essential values of the old rhythm. Moreover, it is a mere bagatelle compared with the discords and disturbances which attend a translation of old English verse in new English prose. The prose translation not only fails utterly to keep the essentials of the old rhythm and style, but it thrusts between the reader and the original a mass of misleading suggestions. Every one knows the biblical manner, with hints now of Malory and now of Bunyan and now of Scott, dished up as “exquisite and lucid prose” by panting followers of Mr. Andrew Lang’s *Theocritus*; and whoso translates *Beowulf* in this lingo kills *Beowulf*, let us say with Milton, “in the eye.” Indeed, the better his prose, the worse his translation in the present case. I do not mean merely “Wardour-Street English,” which Professor Child very justly condemns in the preface to his own translation of the epic, the *twy-handled* and *her seemed* industry; but I mean also that really lucid and really exquisite prose which does such wonderful work for a master like Mr. Mackail in rendering an exquisite and lucid Greek original. The virtue of oldest English verse was not artistic smoothness and lucidity, but artistic roughness, a kind of ordered violence. Miranda should not be set to work lifting and hauling the huge Saxon logs. There are surer ways of proving *traduttore, traditore*, than by attempting verse translation of Old English, even with the aid of a “pedestrian muse.”

If space allowed, I should like to discuss one

other matter with Professor Child. He yearns for the real, the great poet, who shall translate *Beowulf* in adequately great verse. But is *Beowulf* the work of a really great poet? Is it what we now call a really great poem? Is it not rather a precious specimen of a mass of amazingly average and uniform poetry which is great only so far as it is national, racial, epic in the large sense, thinking the thoughts of a new, half-formed civilization, reflecting the life of a keen and conquering folk, and echoing to the clash of battle down long years of warfare on land and sea?

FRANCIS B. GUMMERE.

Haverford College.

SATIRE IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—Satire against Pope and Church played a large part in the literature of the Middle Ages. After Walther von der Vogelweide, who was one of the first to raise his voice against the church (“Ich sach mit mînen ougen,” etc.), there was scarcely a writer who would not give expression to like sentiments.

In this general denunciation we find in *Vri-dankes Bescheidenheit*, 1229 (publ. by Wilh. Grimm, Goettingen, 1834), on page 154, lines 6 and 7,

“Zu Rôme ist manec valscher list
dar an der bâbst unschuldich ist”

which shows an insight or partiality to some pope as Grimm suggests, which we do not find in any other work, until we come in *Reineke De Vos*. 1498, ll. 4215–16 (Buch II. Cap. 9), upon these lines:

“alsus is dar mannige list,
dar an de pawes unschuldich ist.”

It is evident that these lines are copies of the earlier work, since Freidank’s *Bescheidenheit* was very popular throughout the Middle Ages, and only ten years after the appearance of *Reineke De Vos* in 1508 Sebastian Brant compiled and published Freidank’s *Bescheidenheit* anew, and in this work we read:—

“Man hielt etwan uff kein Spruch nicht,
Den nit Herr Frydank hat gedicht.”

BABETTA STADLER.

Kansas University.